

to avoid prosecution and blackmail of the semi-legal variety as an incident in divorce suits or breach of promise actions. In civil litigation the fashion in the Law Courts is to show incredulity as though it were not notorious that hospitals never report cases in which abortion has been practised and as if the only abortionists were those who find themselves involved in a prosecution very often as the result of the woman's death. These defendants who range from well-meaning but unskilful philanthropists to real villains are very often women, with the result that, most sexual crimes being legally impossible and high finance not open to women, a large proportion of the women in penal servitude have been sent there for abortion. Obviously since abortion is totally forbidden its intelligent regulation is impossible, but in practice the richest and most competent abortionists are seldom prosecuted.

All this would be remedied by the legalization of abortion. But there are arguments on the other side with which the present book does not fairly deal. If, as it leads one to suppose, abortion is in America most practised by married women who do not want more children, the same is not the case in England, where most of the women concerned are unmarried, and though fear of pregnancy may not deter many women, yet it is clear that the legalizing of abortion would be a further blow to the cause of morality. A more serious argument against it is based on the fact that contrary to Dr. Rongy's view, an abortion does often have a most deleterious effect if not on the health yet on the feelings and nerves of the woman. The willingness of the victims to give evidence against the abortionists cannot be solely due to intimidation by the police and often no doubt represents a genuine semi-physical reaction against the termination of a natural process.

CECIL BINNEY.

BIRTH CONTROL

Cox, Gladys M., M.B., B.S. *Clinical Contraception*. London, 1933. William Heinemann (Medical Books) Ltd. Pp. vi+173. Price 7s. 6d.

THIS book is at its best when it most exactly lives up to its title. In the chapters—fortunately, the majority—that set out to instruct practitioners in birth-control technique, describing established contraceptive procedures, their application, relative merits and special indications, the level reached is higher than in any other work on birth control addressed to medical readers. Not only is the matter itself admirably selected and presented, but the writing has a hard exact quality that is as attractive as it is rare in works on this subject. It is evident that in these sections of her book, Dr. Cox speaks straight from the consulting-room and the clinic, and not from the library. Probably no English writer on contraception can claim a greater or more varied experience in giving birth-control instruction.

The rest of the book, in particular where it deals with the chemistry of contraception and the appraisal of such methods as the use of vagino-uterine pessaries, is not quite up to the same very high standard. Here Dr. Cox has perforce drawn more on the work of others than on her own experience, and it is no reflection on her to say that her own experience is worth all the scissors and paste in the world. Giving, however, the fullest weight to this criticism—which, in fact, concerns only a relatively small part of the work—it must in fairness be said that even among those who are held (rightly) to be authorities on contraception there can be but few who would not learn something of practical value from reading this book. It is the most complete work by an English writer on the clinical aspects of the subject.

E. M. HOLMES.

